

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for carefully considering this application and for courtesies extended during the telephone interview conducted on September 7, 2006.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 3-9 are currently pending in this application. New claims 10-20 have been added by this reply. Claims 3 and 12 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 3 and 12.

Claim Amendments

Claims 3 and 5-8 have been amended to clarify the invention. Support for the amendments may be found, for example, in Figure 3-4 and the accompanying text of the application. No new matter has been added by any of the aforementioned amendments.

Claim Objection(s)

Claim 6 was objected to as including an informality noted by the Examiner. The Applicant has amended claim 6 to address this informality. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 103

Claims 3, 4, 7, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S.

Patent No. 6,071,758 (“Steffen”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,460,825 (“Haghiri-Tehrani”). To the extent that this rejection applies to the amended claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Specifically, independent claim 3, as amended, recites: (i) a support strip comprising at least one roughly parallel gripping area; (ii) a first support element and at least a second support element, where the first support element comprises a first set of conducting elements, each of said conducting elements having a contact pad and a wiring pad, and where the second support element comprises a second set of conducting elements, each of said conducting elements having a contact pad and a wiring pad; (iii) the first support element is connected to the at least one gripping area using at least a first snap-off junction area, where the second support element is connected to the at least one gripping area using at least a second snap-off junction area; and (iv) each support element is configured to be overmoulded to obtain respectively a first and at least a second data carrier body.

The following is an example of an embodiment of the invention. The following example is not intended to limit the scope of the claims. Turning to the example, Figure 3 shows a single support strip that includes gripping areas for support or clamping by handling systems such as a machine or even a user. Further, snap-off junction areas are used to join support elements to the gripping areas. Support elements may include contact pads and wiring pads. In an overmoulding step, each support element on the support strip is configured to be overmoulded to form a data carrier body to obtain a plurality of data carrier bodies. The resulting shape of each of the card bodies the contour of the corresponding support element. Microcircuits may then be inserted into the card bodies *after* the overmoulding step. Moreover, in this embodiment, a plurality of card bodies may be formed on a single support strip, where the card bodies may then be individually

snapped off at snap-off junction areas, thus enabling card bodies to be manufactured in a continuous manner for mass production.

Turning to the rejection, to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness...the prior art reference (or references when combined) must teach or suggest all the claim limitations.” (*See* M.P.E.P. §2143). The Applicant respectfully asserts that the cited references do not teach or suggest all the limitations recited in the amended claims.

The Examiner asserts that Steffen teaches a support strip comprising at least one support element, wherein the support element comprises a conducting element having a contact pad and a wiring pad (*see* Office Action, July 28, 2006). However, the Applicant respectfully asserts that Steffen fails to teach or suggest a single support strip comprising two or more support elements.

In particular, amended independent claim 3 requires, *inter alia*, “a first support element and at least a second support element, wherein the first support element comprises a first set of conducting elements, each of said conducting elements having a contact pad and a wiring pad, wherein the second support element comprises a second set of conducting elements, each of said conducting elements having a contact pad and a wiring pad... wherein each support element is configured to be overmoulded to obtain respectively a first and at least a second data carrier body.” Steffen is completely silent with respect to a support strip including a plurality of support elements as recited in amended independent claim 3.

Rather, Steffen teaches a method for manufacturing at most one micromodule on a single support grid. The micromodule, as disclosed in Steffen, is connected to the support grid with one set of conducting elements (*see* Steffen, Figure 2-3 with accompanying text). Therefore, although the micromodule may include a support element with a set of conducting elements mounted on a

support grid, the support grid does *not* have the capability to support more than one micromodule. In fact, Steffen is not directed to a method of manufacturing multiple micromodules for mass production, but rather toward the manufacture of one micromodule to overcome problems related to the use of dielectric material. In other words, Steffen does not teach or suggest a single support strip including a plurality of support elements. Accordingly, the Applicant respectfully asserts that the support *strip*, as recited in the amended claims, could not be reasonably construed to be equivalent to the support *grid* of Steffen. Thus, it would be clear to one skilled in the art that Steffen fails to teach or suggest at least a single support strip that includes at least two support elements as required by amended independent claim 3.

Moreover, Haghiri-Tehrani fails to teach or suggest a single support strip that includes multiple support elements. In particular, while Haghiri-Tehrani discloses multiple IC modules on a carrier film (*see* Haghiri-Tehrani, Figure 1), Haghiri-Tehrani fails to disclose supports elements as recited in the claim. In particular, the support elements recited in the claim are configured to be overmoulded while no such teaching or suggesting is disclosed in Haghiri-Tehrani. In fact, Haghiri-Tehrani is completely silent with respect to even using a moulding process to create the IC modules. In view of the above, Steffen and Haghiri-Tehrani, whether considered separately or in combination, do not teach or suggest the aforementioned limitation as recited in amended independent claim 3.

Moreover, the Examiner admits that Steffen fails to show at least one roughly parallel gripping area and that the support element is connected to the at least one gripping area using a snap-off junction area (*see* Office Action mailed July 28, 2006, p.3). Further, Haghiri-Tehrani fails to teach or suggest that which Steffen lacks.

In particular, amended independent claim 3 requires, *inter alia*, “at least one roughly parallel gripping area, wherein the first support element is connected to the at least one gripping area using at least a first snap-off junction area, wherein the second support element is connected to the at least one gripping area using at least a second snap-off junction area.” The aforementioned limitation requires at least one snap-off junction that connects at least one gripping area to at least one support element to enable the separation of card bodies at the snap-off junction areas. Haghiri-Tehrani is completely silent with respect to a parallel gripping area and a snap-off junction area.

In one embodiment of the invention, a gripping area corresponds to parallel areas on the strip that are able to be gripped by either a handling system such as a machine or a user. Further, a snap-off junction corresponds to a snap-off junction area corresponding to a portion of the support strip that is connected to a specific portion of a support element (*see* Specification, Fig. 3, reference number 11). The snap-off junction is configured such that once the carrier bodies have been overmoulded, the snap-off junction may be broken to disconnect the carrier body from the support strip.

With respect to the snap-off junction, Haghiri-Tehrani teaches a module configured to be etched or punched out of a carrier film. Said another way, the entire module must be *cut* from the carrier film. (*see* Haghiri-Tehrani, Figure 14 and accompanying text).

With respect to the gripping area, the Examiner points to the dashed lines in Figure 14 of Haghiri-Tehrani to illustrate a gripping area connected to a snap-off junction area. However, it would not be possible for the gripping area to be positioned in the center of a card because: (i) the areas must be parallel; and (ii) a machine or a user will not grip the center of the strip to handle its processing. In view of the fact that Haghiri-Tehrani fails to teach or suggest a gripping area, it

follows that Haghiri-Tehrani does not teach or suggest a snap-off junction area connected to the gripping area. Moreover, as discussed above, Haghiri-Tehrani does not teach or suggest using a snap-off junction area to disconnect the module to the carrier film; rather, Haghiri-Tehrani discloses cutting the module out of the carrier film. Clearly, cutting the module out of the carrier is not equivalent to using a snap-off junction area. In view of the above, Steffen and Haghiri-Tehrani, whether considered separately or in combination, do not teach or suggest the aforementioned limitation as recited in amended independent claim 3.

In view of the above, Steffen and Haghiri-Tehrani, whether considered separately or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all the limitations of amended independent claim 3. Thus, amended independent claim 3 is patentable over Steffen and Haghiri-Tehrani. Dependent claims are patentable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 5 and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Steffen in view of Haghiri-Tehrani and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,581,065 (“Nishikawa”). To the extent that this rejection applies to the amended claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5 and 8 depend from amended independent claim 3. As discussed above, neither Steffen nor Haghiri-Tehrani teach or suggest all the limitations of independent claim 3. Further, Nishikawa does not teach or suggest that which Steffen and Haghiri-Tehrani lack. This is evidenced by the fact that Nishikawa is only relied upon to teach “a support element comprising a foolproofing edge with which geometry complies with the standard GSM 11.11” (Office Action mailed July 28, 2006, p. 4).

Thus, Steffen, Haghiri-Tehrani, and Nishikawa, whether viewed separately or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all the limitations of independent claims 3. Therefore, independent claim 3 is patentable over Steffen, Haghiri-Tehrani, and Nishikawa. Dependent claims 5 and 8 are patentable over Steffen, Haghiri-Tehrani, and Nishikawa for at least the same reasons as presented above. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Steffen in view of Haghiri-Tehrani and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,641,049 (“Luu”). To the extent that this rejection applies to the amended claims, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Amended claim 6 depends from amended independent claim 3. As discussed above, neither Steffen nor Haghiri-Tehrani teach or suggest all the limitations of independent claim 3. Further, Luu does not teach or suggest that which Steffen and Haghiri-Tehrani lack. This is evidenced by the fact that Luu is only relied upon to teach that “the support element comprises a second foolproofing edge” (Office Action mailed July 28, 2006, p. 5).

Thus, Steffen, Haghiri-Tehrani, and Luu, whether viewed separately or in combination, fail to teach or suggest all the limitations of independent claim 3. Therefore, independent claim 3 is patentable over Steffen, Haghiri-Tehrani, and Luu. Dependent claim 6 is patentable over Steffen, Haghiri-Tehrani, and Luu for at least the same reasons as presented above. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

New Claims

Claims 10-20 have been added by this reply. Support for new claim 10 may be found, for example, on page 2 of the application. Support for new claim 11 may be found, for example, on

page 3 of the application. Support for new claims 12-14 may be found, for example, on page 3 and Figure 3 of the application. Support for new claim 15 may be found, for example, on page 1 of the application. Support for new claims 16-17 may be found, for example, on page 3 and Figure 2 of the application. Support for new claim 18 may be found, for example, on page 3 and Figure 3 of the instant application. Support for new claims 19-20 may be found, for example, on page 2 of the application.

With respect to new independent claim 12, new independent claim 12 includes essentially the same patentable limitations as amended independent claim 3 and, thus, is patentable over the cited references for at least the same reason as amended independent claim 3. Dependent claims are patentable over the cited references for at least the same reason as amended independent claim 3 and new independent claim 12.

Claim 19 depends from amended independent claim 3 and, thus, is patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons as amended independent claim 3. Claims 13-18 and 20 depend, directly or indirectly, on new claim 12 and, thus, are patentable over the cited references for at least the same reasons.

In addition, with respect to new dependent claims 19 and 20 which recite “wherein a microcircuit is connected to the wiring pad in the first set of conducting elements after the first support element has been overmoulded.” The Applicant respectfully asserts that none of the cited references teach or suggest the aforementioned limitation.

Specifically, Steffen and Haghiri-Tehrani, only discloses that the microcircuit is attached to the support element *prior* to being encapsulated in a molding material (*see* Steffen, claim 19; Haghiri-Tehrani, claim 7, Figures 4a-4b). In other words, both of the cited references are

completely silent with respect to (i) overmoulding the support elements; (ii) where each of the resulting shapes follows the contour of the corresponding support element; (iii) obtaining two (or more) card bodies; and *afterwards* (iv) inserting a microcircuit for each card body. Thus, Steffen and Haghiri-Tehrani, whether considered separately or in combination, do not teach or suggest the above limitation and do not render it obvious.

In view of the above, new claims 10-20 are patentable over the cited prior art references. Accordingly, a favorable action in the form of a notice of allowance is respectfully requested for the new claims.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 09669/059001).

Dated: October 30, 2006

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Jonathan P. Osha
Registration No.: 33,986
OSHA · LIANG LLP
1221 McKinney St., Suite 2800
Houston, Texas 77010
(713) 228-8600
(713) 228-8778 (Fax)
Attorney for Applicant